

## Then This Girl Shows Up... by JoMo3

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**Summary:**

As Lucas' birthday approaches, Mike worries he's neglecting his friends and spending all of his time with his sort-of girlfriend.

## Then This Girl Shows Up...

### Author's Note:

Thanks again for the kudos and comments. I hope you like this one.

*What matters is that he is your best friend. And then this girl shows up and starts living in your basement and all you ever wanna do is pay attention to her.*

*That's not true!*

*Yes it is! And you know it, and he knows it, but no one ever says anything about it until you start punching and yelling at each other like goblins with intelligence scores of zero.*

It was a rainy Saturday afternoon in Hawkins. Mike and Will sat in Fort Byers, reading comic books as they waited for the rain to let up.

"You know, it's Lucas' birthday next week," Will told his friend.

Mike looked up from Captain America. "I know; next Friday. You think I forgot?"

"I didn't," Will began. "But Dustin and Lucas think you may have."

"Why?" Mike asked.

"Well, it's just....you've been spending so much time with El, they think you might've been...preoccupied."

It was true. Since their first date a week ago, Mike and Eleven had become even more inseparable. When Mike wasn't planning the next campaign or doing his homework, he would hop on his bike to go and see her.

Even when they were with the boys, his attention was always on El, whispering and giggling with her.

"He's my best friend, of course I'm going to remember," Mike said defensively.

"Are you sure about that?" Will asked.

"Yeah I'm sure. He's still my best friend, but El's my girlfr...." he stopped himself and immediately turned red. He and El hadn't had the boyfriend/girlfriend talk yet; and even if they had, he wasn't ready to talk about it with his friends yet.

Will smirked. "Ok. Just get him something cool, okay?"

"Okay," Mike said.

"How are things with you and her, anyway?" Will asked.

Mike smiled. "Good. I still need to take her on a second date, though."

"You've been going over there almost every day, you haven't been on a second date?"

Mike shook his head. "Every time we...hang out, Hopper's there, or we're with you guys."

Mike started to tell Will that he also hadn't kissed Eleven since their first date and was eager to do it again, but decided not to share that bit of information.

"We have a long weekend coming up, soon," Will said. "Do something with her then."

"Maybe." Mike poked his head outside of the fort. "I think the rain's dying down. C'mon."

The two boys gathered the comic books and headed over to Will's.

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Hours later, after spending time at Will's, Mike biked his way home as the sun was setting. As he passed by Lucas' house, he saw his friend taking the trash out, and rode over to him.

"Hey."

"Hey." Lucas crossed his arms and grinned. "Got that campaign done yet?"

"No, I'm going to work on it tonight, though. Maybe by next week. You wanna come over for dinner? My mom's making meatloaf."

"No, that's okay. We just ate."

Mike nodded his head.

"What'd you and El do today?"

"Nothing," Mike said. "I was over at Will's all day. We tried to call you on the Supercom." Lucas began walking towards the front of his house, Mike following as he walked his bike. "Where were you today?"

"My dad made me go with him into the city to see my cousins."

Mike nodded his head. "Cool." Then, remembering, he asked "Hey what do you want for your birthday?"

"I want the campaign finished," Lucas said, stopping in his driveway.

"I know, I know," Mike said. "It'll be done. But that's for everyone. What do *you* want?"

Lucas shrugged his shoulders. "Whatever, man. Are you gonna come over?"

Lucas had, for years, had a sleepover the weekend of his birthday.

"Yeah, I'll be there."

Lucas smirked. "Uh-huh. I thought maybe you'd be too busy sucking face with El."

Mike got red from embarrassment and the need to defend El. "Why're you guys being mouth breathers about me and her?"

"You guys?"

"Will said something like that earlier today. I thought you guys liked El."

"We do, it...."

Mr. Sinclair poked his head out of the front door, and told Lucas about the dishes waiting for him.

"Look, I gotta go," Lucas said. "I'm sorry. Talk to you later, alright?"

"Fine," Mike said, turning his bike. He rode home.

That night as he tried to sleep, he kept thinking about Will and Lucas, and the things they'd said. *Was* he spending too much time with El? Was he neglecting his friends? He didn't think he was, but they obviously felt differently. It'd only been a week since they'd dated. He thought to himself-if he had a choice to spend an afternoon playing Dungeons & Dragons with the boys or spending time with Eleven....it'd be a toss up.

Sighing, he turned in his bed, not knowing how he was supposed to feel. Just then, he heard a car door slam, and a "Thanks, Steve" from his sister outside.

Minutes later he heard the front door close quietly and could hear Nancy's quiet footsteps as she padded up the stairs and by his room. Throwing his covers aside, he went to her room and tapped softly on the closed door.

"Nancy?"

She pulled the door open, a look of relief on her face. "Jesus, Mike, you scared me. What do you want?"

It was almost one o'clock, way past Nancy's curfew. Mike could see she had been..occupied..with Steve; her clothing was disheveled and

her makeup was somewhat askew.

“Can I come in?”

She sighed, and opened the door wider for him to come in. “What is it?”

“It’s....me and El.”

“Awwww,” Nancy said, jokingly pinching Mike’s cheek. “What’s the matter with you and your girlfriend?”

“She’s not my girlfriend,” he said, shaking his head. “Will and Lucas....I think they’re jealous or something of me and El.”

Nancy scrunched up her face. “One of them likes El?”

“No, I....” He sighed. “Do you think I’m spending too much time with El?”

She shrugged her shoulders. “Well, Mike...kind of. But,” she said, when she saw his face fall, “It’s not like you’re ignoring your friends or anything.” She paused, remembering something. “You’ve got to balance it out. I made that mistake when I first dated Steve. Barb was...”

Mike could tell she was getting emotional recalling her friend. Not knowing what to do, he rubbed her arm in an attempt to comfort her.

“Barb didn’t like that I was...I don’t know, like...replacing her? But I wasn’t,” she said, looking at her brother. “It’s just...when things begin, it’s so exciting. That’s how you feel with El, right?”

“Well....I guess.”

There was a knock at the door, and they both jumped.

“Nancy? Are you just getting home?” Mrs. Wheeler asked from the other side of the bedroom door.

“No, mom, I...I’ve been here for a while,” she lied.

A pause, then “Is Steve in there with you?”

“No, mom, I’m....I’m talking to Mike.”

“Hi, mom,” Mike muttered.

“Go to bed, Michael,” Mrs. Wheeler said. A moment later, they heard her walk away from the door.

“Look, Mike, it’s late. The only advice I can give you is...try to make time for both El and your friends, okay?”

Mike nodded his head. “Thanks.”

Nancy ruffled his hair. “Aww, my little brother’s growing up.”

“Stop it,” Mike said, pushing her hand away. Giving her a smirk, he went back to his room.

On Sunday, El was anxiously waiting for Mike to come over. Hopper, who had the day off, was watching the Cavaliers’ game on TV with officers Callahan and Powell. El always tried to watch sports games with Hopper, but got bored easily, while Hopper seemed to get more excited as the games went on.

She got up from the couch and peeked out the window.

“El, sweetie, he’ll get here when he gets here,” Hopper said as he grabbed a beer.

“How’re you handling the dating?” Powell asked Hopper.

Jim shook his head. “We don’t talk about that.”

Finally, El saw Mike pull up on his bike. She ran to her room to grab her shoes. When she came back, she gave Hopper a kiss on the cheek, then ran to the door, Hopper on her tail.

Mike was waiting by the steps for her. “Hi, El,” he said when he saw her, a smile on his face. It faded when he saw Hopper standing in the

doorway. "Hi, chief."

"Hi, kid," Hopper said. "Where are you guys headed?"

El hopped on the back of the bike, wrapping her arms around Mike's waist.

"We're, um," Mike said, trying to not be scared, "We're going to Sears to get something, then we're going over to Will's. Sir."

Hopper nodded, and glanced at his watch. "Back by eight."

"Yes, sir."

Hopper glanced at Eleven. "Have fun."

She smiled at him.

Hopper watched Mike back his bike up, then ride off towards downtown. He went back inside, grinning. He honestly did like Mike Wheeler, but he couldn't help tormenting the poor boy.

The two teens were quiet on the ride downtown, but when they arrived at Sears, Eleven asked why they were there.

"I've gotta get a gift for Lucas. His birthday is Friday."

"Birthday?" Eleven knew all about birthdays; she had missed his in September, but had been around for Holly's last month. She had known Lucas' was soon, but didn't know when.

"Yeah, but I don't know what to get him yet."

They walked inside and wandered to the toy aisle. Stopping in front of the board games, Mike scanned the options. El shyly took his hand in hers. Their eyes met, and they smiled at each other.

"Do you know yet?"

"No, not yet."



El looked over the colorful boxes. Suddenly, her eyes lit up. "That one," she said, pointing.

Mike followed her gaze, and saw what she was pointing to. "Risk?"

El nodded her head. "It has...army soullers."

Mike smiled. "Army soldiers."

"Yes. And Lucas likes army, right?"

"Yeah, you're right. He might like that game." Mike made a face.

"Mike?"

"It's too high, I can't reach it."

Letting go of Mike's hand, El looked up and down the aisle. Seeing no one, she said "Mike?"

"Huh?"

"Catch."

He was confused, but then saw her glare at the board game, her face hardened in concentration.

The box scooted closer to the edge and then, suddenly, dropped from the top shelf. Mike instinctively put out his hands. However, his hands grasped air as the game went through them and fell to the floor.

"Dammit," he said.

El giggled, and wiped away the little blood from her nose.

Mike picked the game up. "It should be okay. Come on, let's go before somebody comes." He took her hand and led her to the checkout lanes.

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They spent the rest of the afternoon at Will's playing his Atari. Eventually, Dustin came over with some snacks and the four of them took turns playing and eating Nilla Wafers.

"Wait'll Lucas sees what I got him," Dustin said as he ran out of lives in Pac Man. "He's going to lose it."

"What'd you get him?" Will asked.

Dustin smiled as he handed the controller to El. "Incredible Hulk # 181, first appearance of Wolverine."

The boys oohed and ahhed; El scrunched up her nose in confusion.

Mike tried to explain; "He's this really cool superhero. He's Lucas' favorite."

El nodded her head in understanding.

"I don't get my allowance till Thursday, I'll get him something then," Will said. Then, to Dustin, "You should see what Mike got him."

Mike showed Dustin, who nodded his head. "Cool. He's going to like it."

Just then there was a knock at the door. Will went and got it and let Lucas in.

El smiled at him. "Hi, Lucas."

"Hey, El. Who's next?" he asked, sitting on the floor next to Will.

"Here," El said, handing him the controller. Mike scrambled to make sure Lucas couldn't see the gift.

For the next hour the group took turns playing, every now and then switching out one game for another. Lucas and Will on the floor, and Dustin and El on the couch, Mike in between them. Every so often El would rest her head on Mike's shoulder. When one of the boys would catch them, they would roll their eyes; Mike honestly didn't care

anymore.

At around 6:30, Joyce came home from work and made fried chicken for the boys. At 7:30, Mike told El he had to take her back.

She gave the boys a hug (Joyce too) and she and Mike left the Byers' home.

On the way back, she asked "Is Lucas mad at me?"

"Why do you say that?"

"He was...." she struggled for the word, then said "Different."

Mike sighed. "The guys think....I'm spending too much time with you."

El looked confused. "But we're....friends. Romantic friends." She saw the back of Mike's neck turn pink as he kept riding.

"Yeah, but...they think I'm not hanging out with them enough."

"Oh. Are you?"

"I don't think so. I mean, I still see them pretty much everyday. And you...."

"Yes?"

"I, um, I like seeing you every day, too."

"Me too," she said. They rode in silence for a few minutes, and then El said "My tutor says I'm getting better. She says I can maybe start school soon."

"That's great, El," Mike said. "I'm really proud of you."

"Thank you." Suddenly she got confused; they were a few minutes from Hopper's trailer, but Mike was slowing down and getting off the bike. "Mike?"

He stood in front of her. "Sorry. I just..." He got shy all of a sudden. "El, I've been wanting to kiss you since last week, but we never have

a minute by ourselves.”

“Oh.” Smiling, she stepped off the bike. Putting her hands on his shoulders, she leaned up and gave him a quick kiss.

They both smiled, then Mike, not knowing where this confidence was coming from, put his hands on her hips and brought her closer to him, their lips meeting and lingering just a little bit longer before they broke the kiss, smiling at one another.

“Sorry,” he said.

She shook her head. “I liked it.”

He blushed, and checked his watch. Time was running out. “Come on, let’s go,” he said as they both hopped on the bike.

The school week went by quickly and before the group knew it, it was Friday, the night of Lucas’ birthday/sleepover. Hopper had agreed to let El go over for the birthday and party, but wasn’t about to let his El sleep over with Wheeler there.

Around six, the whole gang was together at the Sinclair’s home. His mom brought out a cake and everyone sang “Happy Birthday.”

They gave gifts to the birthday boy; Dustin’s comic book, Will’s Rambo poster, Mike’s Risk game.

“Guys, these are awesome,” Lucas said.

“And there’s something else,” Mike said with a knowing grin on his face.

“What?” Lucas asked. Then he put two and two together; “You finished the campaign?!”

Mike nodded, and the boys whooped.

“The game’s in my backpack, let me go get it and we can play,” Mike said.

He started to get up when all of a sudden, El said “I have a gift for Lucas.”

The group stared at her. Lucas hadn’t been expecting anything from her. “Really?” he asked.

She nodded her head, and went to go get her backpack. She was back a minute later, with something wrapped in newspaper. She handed it to Lucas.

He took it, turning it in his hands, and then began unwrapping it.

“I thought you might like it,” she said, quietly. She had never given a gift before.

Lucas pulled away the wrapping paper to reveal a camouflage bandana, similar to the one he already had. He grinned. “Thanks, El.”

She beamed, happy that she’d done it right.

Lucas, Dustin, and Will gathered the gifts from the table and headed down to Lucas’ basement to set up the game. Mike stayed behind and took El’s hand.

“That was really nice of you.”

She shrugged her small shoulders. “Lucas is my friend.”

“Still.” Mike saw that no one was looking, and gave El a quick peck on the lips. “Come on,” he said, taking her hand. “Let’s go play.”

The boys decided to play the new campaign first, and to play Risk in the morning. El, not the biggest fan of Dungeons & Dragons, watched the game with interest for a while before reading some comic books she’d brought with her.

A little later, Mrs. Sinclair called down that Hopper was here to pick up Eleven.

Eleven sighed, and gave Lucas a hug. “Happy Birthday.”

"Thanks," he said.

"I'll walk you up," Mike told her.

Hopper was waiting for her at the front door. "You have fun, kiddo?"

She nodded her head.

"Glad to hear that. Ready to go?"

"Um..." she said, casting a side glance at Mike. "Can I say goodbye to Mike?"

Hopper didn't want to, but he decided he'd cut the boy a break. Nodding his head, he picked up his hat, and told El he'd wait for her outside.

El and Mike turned so they were facing each other.

"I'll call you tomorrow," he told her.

She shook her head. "You don't have to. I want you to have fun with Lucas."

"No, I want to."

They smiled at each other for a moment, then Mike said "Well I'll let you go. I don't want Hop to kill me."

Eleven nodded her head. "Have fun tonight."

"We will."

El looked at him expectantly, and he took the hint. Their heads moved closer, and they gave each other a quick kiss.

"Goodnight, Mike."

"Night, El."

When he went back down to the basement, the other boys were

waiting impatiently.

“You done making out?” Dustin asked with a grin.

“We weren’t making out, guys,” Mike said, sitting back down.

“Oh, El,” Lucas said, trying to imitate Mike’s voice, “Won’t you be my girlfriend? Please?” He puckered up his lips and made kissing noises, causing the other boys (except Mike) to burst into a fit of giggles.

“Shut up,” Mike said, getting angry.

“Ooh, El, let me hold your hand,” Lucas added.

Mike stood up and stomped upstairs, the boys’ laughter following him. Settling in the living room, he crossed his arms and fumed, trying to get his anger under control.

He heard footsteps come up the stairs and a minute later, Lucas was standing in the doorway with his own arms crossed.

“You guys are jerks,” Mike said to him.

“I was just joking,” Lucas said.

“Well, it isn’t funny.” Standing up, Mike got into Lucas’ face. “What’s your problem?”

Lucas backed up a step. “What do you mean, ‘what’s my problem’?”

“Why do you have such a shitty attitude about me and El?”

Lucas paused before he answered. Mike didn’t usually swear, so he knew he’d struck a nerve. “I’m sorry, okay? It’s just....you’ve been spending a lot of time with her, and I thought...”

“Thought what?”

Lucas sighed, unfolded his arms, and kicked at the carpet. “That you were going to stop hanging out with us and stuff.”

“I would never stop hanging out with you guys.”

“Yeah, I know, it’s just you have a cute girlfriend now and I thought...you know, maybe you didn’t need us anymore.”

Mike paused for a second, then smiled. “You think El is cute?”

Lucas looked back at him. “ *One* ,” he said, “Don’t ever tell anyone I said that. *Two* , yeah, Mike, she’s kind of cute, in a way, as much as I may hate to admit it.”

“Uh, thanks,” Mike said. “But she’s not my girlfriend.”

Lucas gave him a look that said ‘Are you kidding me?’

“We’ve only been on one date,” Mike explained, running a hand through his hair. “Besides, I’m too scared to ask her anyway.”

“Look,” Lucas said. “I’m sorry for being a shithead. You and El are....good for each other.” He stuck his hand out. “Truce?”

Mike shook it. “Truce.”

Behind them, Dustin and Will were peeking up from the basement. “If you two are done kissing and making up,” Dustin called, “We have a campaign to finish.”

Lucas and Dustin rolled their eyes and went back to the basement.

The boys were up to the late hours of the night playing their game. When they finally finished at almost 2:30 am, they each collapsed into their sleeping bags and were out like lights.

Saturday afternoon, El was eating Eggos at Hopper’s kitchen table while he had run to the station to get something from his office. She was just cutting into her third waffle when there was a knock at the door. She peeked out the curtain and saw Mike standing on the steps in front of the trailer. He gave her a smile and a wave.

Opening the door, she smiled back. “Hi, Mike.”



“Hey, El. Can I come in?”

She nodded her head, and moved back for him to enter. As he did, she wrapped him in a hug. “How was Lucas’ sleepover?”

“It was fun. We started playing Risk this morning, but everyone had to leave, so we didn’t get to finish. Plus, we were so tired from being up so late.”

El smiled, then said “I thought you were going to call, not come over.”

“I was, but I changed my mind.” He looked confused. “Is Hop here?”

El shook her head as she sat back down at the kitchen table. “He had to go to work but he’ll be back. Do you need to talk to him?”

“No, El, I’m here for you,” Mike said, smiling.

“Oh.” She put down her fork and knife.

“Um, I wanted to ask you something.”

She smiled at him as she waited.

“I wanted to ask if you wanted to go on a date with me tomorrow.”

She smiled even wider. “Yes.”

“Wow. Okay.”

She stood up and moved closer to him. Their eyes met, and Mike felt himself slowly leaning towards El’s lips.

That’s when they heard the door being opened.

“El, sweetie, who’s bike is in the...” Hopper stopped, seeing the two teens mid-kiss. He muttered, “Wheeler.”

“I was just leaving, chief,” Mike said, trying his best not to blush. Looking at El, he said “Bye.”

Mike walked carefully by the chief, expecting to be attacked. When

he got outside, he was surprised to see El had followed him out.

“Mike,” she said in her soft voice.

He turned to look at her. “I hope I didn’t get you in trouble with Hop.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck and gave him a hug. “See you tomorrow.” She gave him a soft kiss on his lips as she pulled away.

Mike glanced up to see if Hopper was watching (thankfully, he wasn’t) and kissed her back. “I’ll see you tomorrow, El,” he said as she unwrapped her arms. He hopped on his bike and headed home.

**Author's Note:**

Thanks for reading! 2-3 more parts to go!